USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DIGITAL
DEVELOPMENT
AWARDS 2020

The Digis recognize and celebrate USAID-funded projects and activities that use digital technology to sustain open, secure, and inclusive digital ecosystems and improve measurable development and humanitarian assistance outcomes.

Digital ecosystems—the stakeholders, systems, and enabling environment that together empower people and communities to use digital technology to access services, engage with each other, or pursue economic opportunities— hold immense potential to help people live more free and prosperous lives.

These ecosystems can help drive economic empowerment and financial inclusion, advance national security, support accountability and transparency in governance, and make development and humanitarian assistance more efficient and effective.

Photo Credit: Usman Ghani

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The 2020 Digi Award Winners

USAID/Kyrgyz Republic: USAID-International Development Law Organization (IDLO) Judicial Strengthening / Trusted Judiciary for creating and helping to implement a holistic e-justice initiative that strengthens the integrity of the justice system, minimizes corruption, and enhances transparency.

USAID/Indonesia: Human Resources for Health in 2030 (HRH2030) Program for strengthening the human resources for health information system and its ecosystem to provide real-time quality data for strategic use, while also supporting policy development that address challenges in the health workforce and contributing to better public health outcomes overall.

USAID/Ukraine: Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration and Services Activity (TAPAS) for helping to advance an electronic procurement system for government purchases and an anti-corruption watchdog network — bringing transparency to the previously opaque public procurement process and reducing corruption in public spending in Ukraine.

USAID/Pakistan: Pakistan Small and Medium Enterprise Activity (SMEA) for helping to transform the country's economy by addressing the structural deficits and inequalities faced by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the digital ecosystem. They achieved this by offering information and communications technology (ICT)-enabled solutions and helping businesses harness digital potential through a service provider network and overall regulatory reform.

USAID/Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA): The Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (USAID Oceans) for creating electronic Catch Documentation and Traceability technologies for data capture from point-of-catch to port entry, improving the sustainability of fisheries in ASEAN and Coral Triangle Member Countries and protecting the livelihoods of people who directly depend on marine ecosystems.

USAID/Kyrgyz Republic: USAID-International Development Law Organization (IDLO) Judicial Strengthening / Trusted Judiciary

Photo Credit: Maxime Fossat

The Challenge

A lack of efficiency and transparency in the Kyrgyz Republic's paper-based judicial system has caused opportunities for corruption at every stage of judicial proceedings—limiting access to due process and undermining the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the entire legal system. Contradictory laws, an inability to track or exchange data, underdeveloped infrastructure, and limited technical capacities of staff have also added to the challenges of this environment. Despite these persistent issues, there were both limited funds and few qualified technical experts to help shape legislative and system-wide change.

The Approach
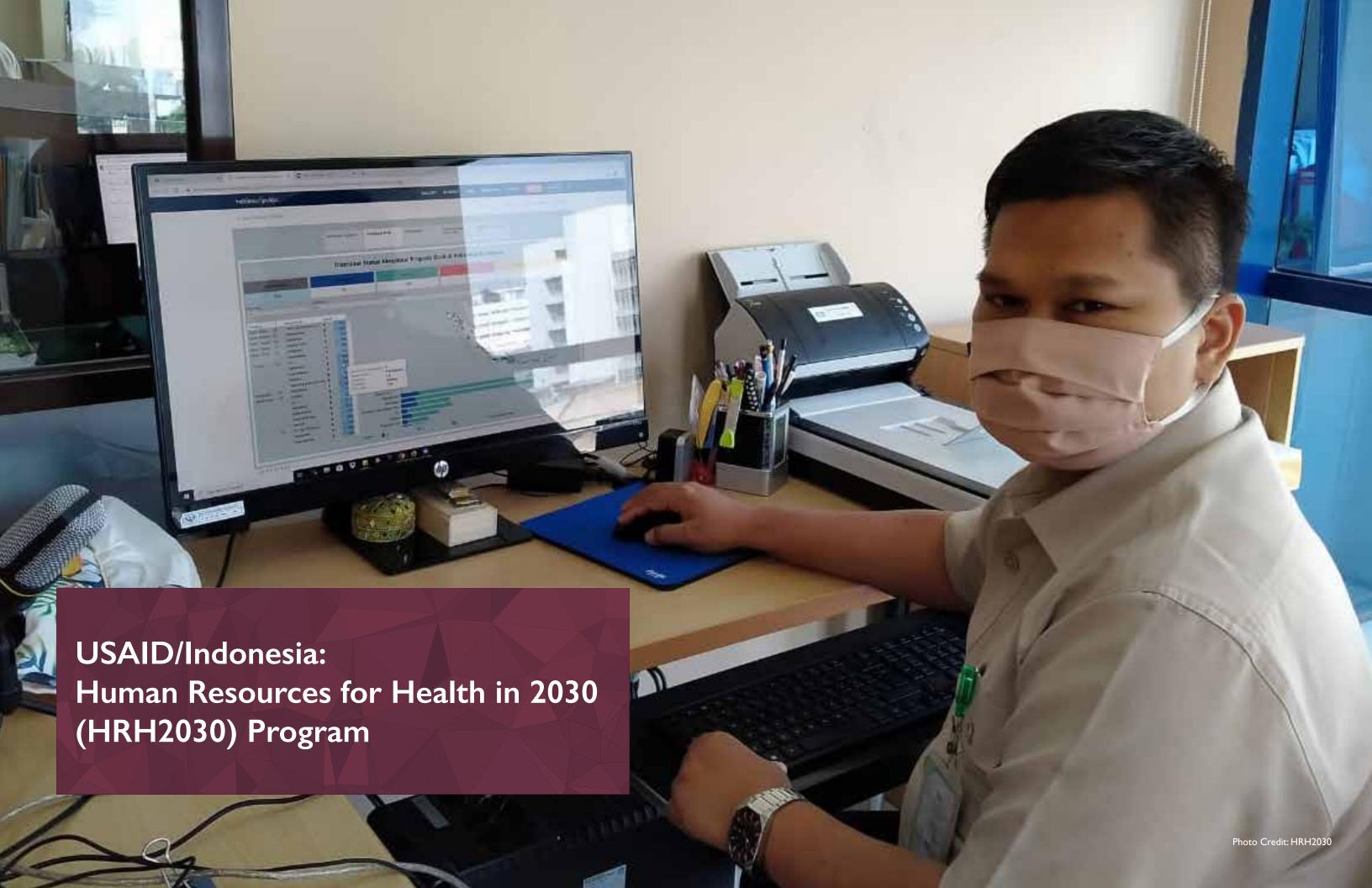
IDLO started implementing USAID funded judiciary reform programs in the Kyrgyz Republic from an analysis to understand the challenges facing the judicial system. The USAID-IDLO team then devoted significant time to observing, reviewing, analyzing, and discussing the infrastructure, situation, and needs of the end-users of customized technology solutions: judges, court staff, and other legal professionals. After this discovery and research phase, the team created and implemented a customized and holistic e-justice initiative to strengthen judicial integrity, minimize corruption, and enhance transparency. Adilet Sot, a dedicated information technology (IT) entity for the judiciary, is a key component of this initiative. This customized solution, built by the USAID team, now serves as a fully resourced organization and central hub for the country's judiciary digitalization efforts.

Adilet Sot supports and implements the routine publication of judicial decisions on a publicly accessed website. It also leverages Automated Case Distribution software for the Supreme Court and lower level courts, while offering audio and video transcription services as needed.

Why It Won

With its holistic approach to e-justice, the USAID-IDLO Judicial Strengthening/Trusted Judiciary Program filled a need where previous initiatives had failed to produce sustainable results. The first supported pilot versions of Adilet Sot were tested among user groups and then received further funding from the judiciary budget to scale up from just a few courts initially to a nationwide rollout, with an allocated budget. In 2019, open publication of judicial decisions increased to 90 percent, greatly improving transparency. Overall, this program not only provided support to e-justice initiatives but has become a leading driver of nationwide digital transformation.

USAID/Indonesia:
Human Resources for Health in 2030
(HRH2030) Program

The Challenge

Indonesia's extensive health system faces a wide spectrum of issues across the workforce, including: inefficient urban-rural distribution; skill-gaps of recent graduates to meet evolving epidemiological and demographic needs; inadequate regulation to ensure quality provision of services; and a fragmented ecosystem of information systems with disparate stakeholders across the labor market. These issues have created challenging health environments in the country and led to some of the highest rates of preventable maternal and neonatal deaths in the Asia Pacific region; a growing HIV epidemic that disproportionately affects vulnerable communities; and rising cases of drug-resistant tuberculosis.
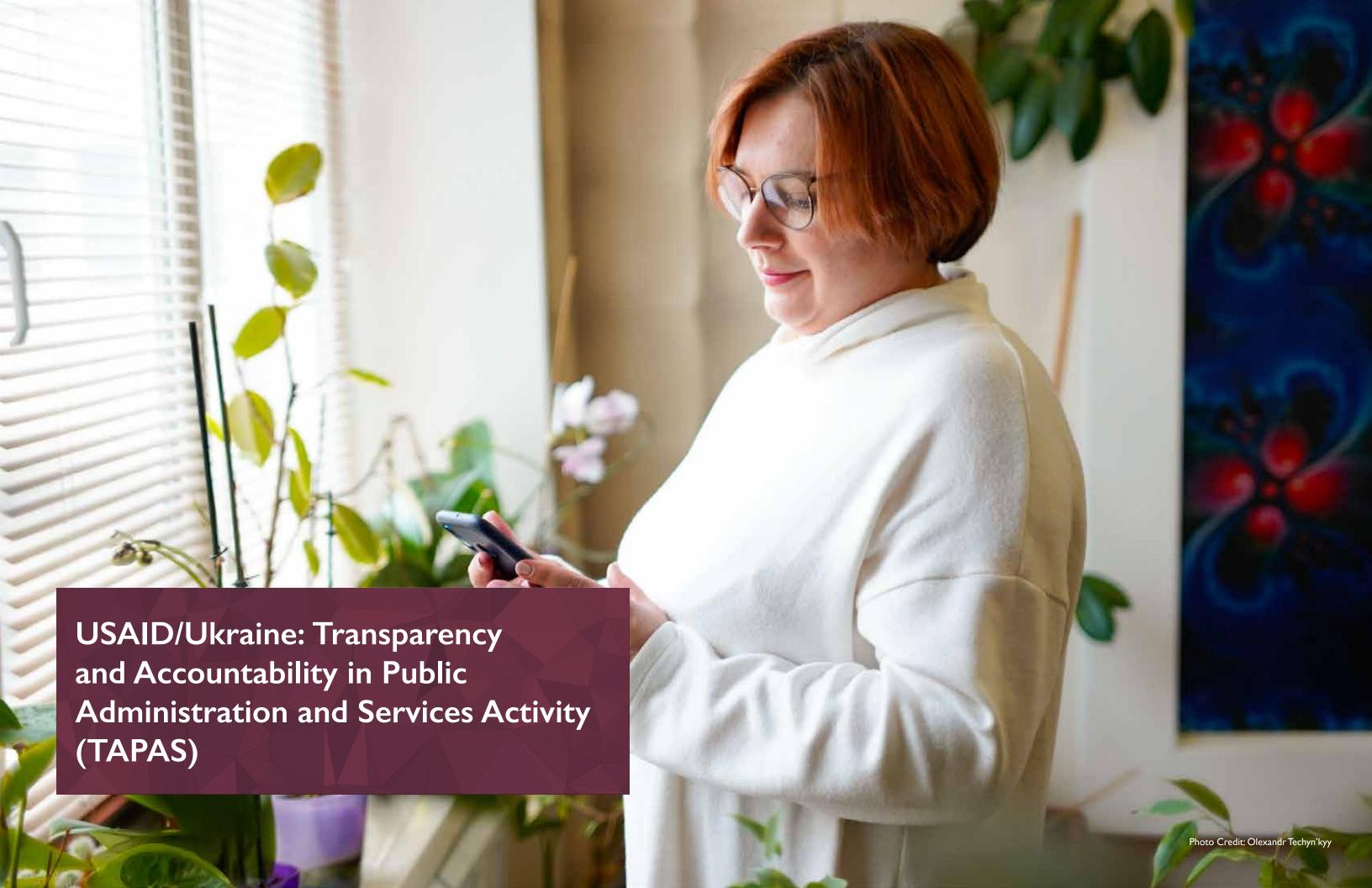
The Approach

Given the vastness and decentralized management of Indonesia's health workforce, the parties involved in addressing public health issues, including the Ministry of Health (MOH) and external stakeholders decided to focus first on building a connected ecosystem of information systems that would gather high-quality data and produce actionable analytics. Human Resources for Health in 2030 (HRH2030) stepped in to support the MOH Board of Human Resources for Health Empowerment and Development and began building this connected data-ecosystem for health professionals. The team created an open, interoperable architecture and a business intelligence platform that both integrates data across the health labor market and strengthens an existing central human resource information system. They also developed a governance structure for stakeholder coordination, increased capacity within the central level MOH, and institutionalized processes within regional government to sustain these efforts.

Why It Won

Leveraging existing systems and digital global goods such as District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2) and the Open Health Information Mediator (OpenHIM), HRH2030 focused on building targeted capacity within Indonesia's MOH to support this evolution of connected, centralized set of information systems. What emerged was a business intelligence platform that stakeholders at all levels within the health system can use. This includes twelve information systems and integrated data sets, including public-facing dashboards for the nationwide COVID-19 response.

By putting the MOH in the driver's seat and providing comprehensive capacity building and mentorship support, HRH2030 has ensured that activities are fully integrated into the Board of Human Resources for Health Empowerment and Development (Badan Pengembangan dan Pemberdayaan Sumber Daya Manusia Kesehatan, or BPPSDMK) structure, including staff job descriptions and work plan activities. And on a larger scale, USAID's HRH2030 program offers a substantial step forward in the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health in 2030, a critical initiative for the Indonesian government.

USAID/Ukraine: Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration and Services Activity (TAPAS)

The Challenge

Ukraine has struggled with systemic corruption over many years. Powerful oligarchs have often leveraged public procurement processes to direct government contracts toward their preferred business partners. In 2014, the country's Revolution of Dignity ushered in a new, reform-oriented government and presented a window of opportunity to effect change in many areas of governance, including public procurement.

The Approach

Transparency International-Ukraine (TI-U), an implementing partner of USAID's Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration and Services (TAPAS) Activity led by Eurasia Foundation, together with a group of Ukrainian volunteers began to build an electronic procurement system for government purchases called Prozorro ("transparency" in Ukrainian). This system was built on the basis of a "golden partnership" between government buyers, suppliers, and civil society to build trust, bring transparency by means of technology to the previously opaque public procurement process, and reduce corruption in public spending. The use of the Prozorro system has now become required by law for all public procurements. Shortly after Prozorro became mandatory for all public buyers, Eurasia Foundation supported TI-U to build DOZORRO ("watchdog" in Ukrainian), an anti-corruption network and public procurement monitoring portal. The DOZORRO network is a community across Ukraine that monitors public procurements and flags high-risk tenders to public buyers, their managing entities, and oversight authorities. The community is made up of 26 civil society

organizations (CSOs), 46 public buyers, and more than 1,000 volunteers. Using powerful analytical tools developed with TAPAS support, CSOs and volunteer civic activists analyze procurement data, identify high-risk tenders, and submit grievances to public authorities. An average of 700 grievances are submitted monthly.

Why It Won

Both DOZORRO and Prozorro have helped create more transparency around the public procurement process in Ukraine. With Prozorro serving as the government-mandated system for all public procurements, the addition of DOZORRO's monitoring portal, watchdog network, and suite of analytical tools has resulted in a truly collaborative and transparent approach to address systemic corruption in the public procurement process.

Between January 2017 and October 2020, Prozorro saved the Ukrainian state budget $4.4 billion. In the same period, the DOZORRO network analyzed over 32,000 high-risk tenders. Of these high-risk tenders, nearly 30,000 were brought to the attention of procuring entities and oversight authorities through formal complaints. More than 4,700 high-risk tenders subsequently became anti-corruption "wins"—that is, the tenders were canceled or substantially amended by the public buyers or illegal tender decisions were reversed. The total value of these fixed 4,700 tenders totaled more than $462 million—a win for transparent, ethical public procurement in the Ukraine.

USAID/Pakistan: Pakistan Small and Medium Enterprise Activity (SMEA)

The Challenge

Digital technology has the potential to transform Pakistan's economy, in terms of spurring the country's information and communications technology (ICT) sector and also cultivating Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) in traditional business sectors. This has become particularly apparent in recent years, as access to the internet and low-cost mobile services has dramatically expanded across the country. There are a variety of factors, however, that are slowing the country's journey toward a more digital economy. Pakistani ICT enterprises—the companies that should be building the digital tools and services that other businesses need to grow—often lack formal structure, support services, and access to finance and are constrained by a limited availability of skilled workers, particularly due to the perceived instability of nascent ICT enterprises.

At the same time, ICT enterprises tend to cater their efforts and service packages to large business clients, so SMEs are often unable to integrate technology into their business processes due to lack of experience with these tools, accessibility, or relevance to specific needs. These challenges are particularly acute for business owners and employees who traditionally have more limited access to technology and resources, such as women and people living in rural and conflict-affected areas.

The Approach

USAID/Pakistan's Small and Medium Enterprise Activity (SMEA) addresses the structural deficits and inequalities faced by SMEs in the digital ecosystem with a three-pronged approach: (1) incentivizing ICT-enabled solutions to remedy constraints through a challenge fund innovation grants program; (2) helping SMEs harness digital potential through a business development service provider network; and (3) supporting regulatory reforms that empower ICT-enabled SMEs.

Why It Won

Taking an ecosystem approach, the activity uses a variety of innovative solutions, such as a startup reality TV show and challenge fund, to address challenges that are acute for a variety of under-served businesses and employees that have more limited access to technology and resources.

SMEA has helped SMEs generate more than 7,700 jobs, $18 million in revenue, $12.5 million in private sector investment, and $8 million in exports to date. SMEA's business development service program has helped more than 1,000 SMEs identify, acquire, and serve customers through digital channels and the CF grant program has awarded 71 grants in two years, creating direct benefits to more than 2,500 SMEs. In addition, more than 60 percent of all trained SMEs have adopted new technology and management practices. Overall, SMEA's interventions have helped drive growth of the ICT and SME sectors in Pakistan, worked to improve the ICT-enabling environment through supporting regulatory reforms, and with their emphasis on women-owned businesses and marginalized groups, have achieved significant social impact.

USAID/Regional Development
Mission for Asia (RDMA):
The Oceans and Fisheries
Partnership (USAID Oceans)

Photo Credit: Melinda Donnelly

The Challenge

Seafood accounts for nearly one-fifth of the world's protein intake and plays a critical role in global food security and trade. The United States is the largest importer of fish and seafood in the world—a market of more than $21.5 billion that is sourced primarily from the Asia-Pacific region. As U.S. demand increases, Southeast Asia's oceans are threatened by several unsustainable components, such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices, which lead to untracked product-sources that then compromise and deteriorate coastal and marine habitats.

The Approach

The USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (USAID Oceans) has been working to support international supply chains, while also improving the sustainability of Asia-Pacific fisheries to protect the fish stocks, economic security, and livelihoods of more than 200 million people who directly depend on marine ecosystems for food and income.

Working with Tetra Tech International Development Services, USAID drew on the expertise of public and private sector partners, local and national governments, and non-governmental partners to design, test, and implement transparent and affordable electronic Catch Documentation and Traceability (eCDT) technologies, which confirm and "follow" legally- and sustainably-caught seafood products throughout each step of the supply chain. eCDT technologies help seafood producers and exporting countries combat illegal, unregulated fishing practices by providing evidence that their seafood products are legal, sustainable, and free of the use of slave labor. Enhanced traceability, using available eCDT hardware and software both at sea on fishing boats and on land once the product reaches a port, strengthens fishery management in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries and addresses human welfare and gender equity issues in these markets.

Why It Won

With a focus on scale, scope, and interoperability, USAID Oceans was broad and filled a gap in the private sector, while remaining inclusive to fisheries of all sizes. USAID Oceans' primary partner in this project, the Southeast Asian Center for Fisheries Development (SEAFDEC), is a regional body with membership from all ASEAN countries and has been mandated to implement regional traceability.

The eCDT technologies that USAID Oceans developed are designed for full-chain traceability from "bait to plate," with a target audience of all actors along the seafood supply chain: fishers, buyers, brokers, middlemen, processors, and exporters. Incorporating user-centered design in every stage and aspect of eCDT's development has brought innovations for small-scale inclusivity for fisheries of all sizes. The eCDT system also incorporates input from stakeholders along the seafood supply chain, including traditionally underserved groups, such as female fishers/processors, who represent 50 percent of the fisheries sector workforce. Through USAID Ocean's digital ecosystem development approach, they built a marketplace of traceable and responsible seafood products, combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing practices and ensuring that consumers and domestic fisheries are protected.